

RI Pre-K Questions and Answers 2021-2022 Grant Application



Introduction

Below please find the RI Pre-K Grant Application Questions and Answers received during the open question and answer period, which ended at noon on Friday, February 26, 2021.

Please note that the questions have been answered in the order that they were received, and duplicate questions may have been combined or merged with a similar question.

Along with carefully reading the questions and answers, we strongly suggest that applicants watch the Informational Webinar [RI Pre-K Informational Webinar](#) as a significant amount of helpful information was shared during that meeting.

Questions and Answers

- 1. How is PRiSM used in the state Pre-k classrooms? I am not familiar with this tool and the website does not list RI as a partner. I would like to better understand this component for my application.**

PRISM is no longer used as a benchmark for demonstrating quality within RI Pre-K classrooms.

- 2. Is TSG required? The CECE standards still state that the assessment system needs to be aligned to the standards, so I was looking for clarification.**

Yes, all RI Pre-K's use Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) as their formative assessment system.

- 3. If we need to purchase the Teaching Strategies Gold program and get the staff trained in the appropriate use of the tool(s), are those allowable budget expenses?**

No, TSG does not need to be part of your proposed budget. The online assessment system and training is paid for and coordinated by RIDE.

- 4. If we need to purchase and have staff trained in the use of the Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers 5th and 6th editions, are those allowable budget expenses?**

Yes, purchasing curriculum for RI Pre-K classrooms is an allowable budget expense. Curriculum training and professional development can be accessed through the center at no additional cost.

- 5. Ensuring that our staff are getting the required RI approved professional development through the Center for Early Learning Professionals is very challenging as the training sessions are constantly filled and unavailable. How else can we get the required training for our RI Pre K staff?**

RI Pre-K professional development, technical assistance and trainings that are required by RIDE will be easily accessible to all RI Pre-K staff.

- 6. Where might we find the Warwick area pay scale information for teachers and teacher assistants so that we can complete our budget projections?**

The teacher's pay scale may be found within the [Warwick Teachers' Union Contract](#).

- 7. I am wondering if any changes have been made for those who have a program with a mixed age group of children ages 3-5?**

Currently, RI Pre-K is only for children who are 4 by September 1st of the present year. If a program is applying under service models 2, 3 or 4 (Head Start & CCAP) they may continue to have a mixed age classroom with the understanding that RI Pre-K funds will only be available for the age eligible children, which will reduce the grant award.

- 8. Model 4 Question: When completing the application and putting in the number of CCAP children for the program budget, what happens when in the fall one or more of these families are no longer CCAP approved or no longer with our program. Do we need to fill that spot with another CCAP child, or will we then pull from the waiting list? Does that slot then transfer to a full RIDE cost category?**

Model 4 was designed with DHS and they are working to minimize disruptions with CCAP subsidies. If for some reason, a child in the RI Pre-K classroom loses their CCAP funding we would ask that the program work with the family and DHS and contact RIDE.

If this happens prior to the beginning of the school year we would direct the program to fill the vacant seat with another child who is CCAP eligible.

If this happens during the school year with a child who is enrolled and currently participating actively in the RI Pre-K classroom the program would follow the above steps and RIDE would assume the cost of the student to minimize disruption

- 9. Can centers that are privately owned and not considered nonprofit can apply.**

Yes, privately owned centers can apply through the grant application process, provided they meet the minimum requirements.

10. If community-based models can now include non-residents, which district will be responsible for delivery of special education services? Home district or the center's district?

Matriculating children who receive special education services will access those services in the same manner as they do currently. Families may choose to continue on within the current program and have children receive services from their home district as they did while attending your preschool program.

Conversations should be had with families who reside in a town that does have RI Pre-K to see if they would like to enter the lottery where, if accepted, services would continue to be provided by the home district and possibly embedded in the program.

11. The hyperlinks aren't working.

We recommend that you download the application and enable editing. This should allow you to complete the application and access the links. Depending on your computer and browser you may also need to click on the link while pushing control.

12. Should paraprofessionals complete the RIELDS Guiding Principles and the 9 Domains?

Yes, paraprofessionals and teacher assistants should complete the foundational RIELDS classes, the Guiding Principles and the 9 Domains. These classes are offered online and are self-paced. RI Pre-K teachers will take RIELDS classes based on their experience, education and previous courses. These may include the 9 Domains and the Instructional Cycle.

13. Is the USDA food program needed for the program to participate?

Yes, all RI Pre-K classrooms must participate, implement and monitor the CACFP food reimbursement program. More information regarding the CACFP can be found here [CACFP](#).

14. Where do we send the photos of the classroom and outside space?

Please attach the photos when submitting the application to RIPre-K@ride.ri.gov.

15. Are DHS children required to follow the RI Pre-K attendance guidelines or the CCAP policy?

Families within the RI Pre-K will need to adhere to the RI Pre-K attendance guidelines. This should be considered when proposing the number of matriculating students within Model 4 and when sharing information with families.

16. If a child is only enrolled for 3 days, would they need to attend 5 days?

Children within the RI Pre-K will need to attend for the full 5 days that the program is offered. RI Pre-K classrooms do not have part time enrollment. This should be considered when proposing the number of matriculating students within Model 4 and when sharing information with families.

17. If we have a blended classroom of 3's and 4's, can the classroom be divided into, let's say 8 - 3year olds and 10 - 4year olds?

Yes, in model 4 you could propose the scenario described above. However, it is important to note that only the age eligible children will be counted as part of the RI Pre-K and so the funding would be based on only the 10 eligible children.

18. Are privately paid students covered? Would they need to continue paying out of pocket or would RIDE cover their tuition?

For Model 4, CCAP matriculation, private pay students may be included in the proposed number of students continuing on in the RI Pre-K. However, within the proposed budgets programs should consider that this is CCAP supplemental model and that all children within the RI Pre-K classroom will need to comply with the RI Pre-K attendance and data submission policies. If you have private pay children that you believe will be matriculating, please indicate that in your enrollment numbers. RIDE will work directly with programs to address private pay families.

19. Since this webinar was so informative, is there any chance a webinar can be set up to go through the budget in a little more detail? Especially for those new programs that have never done this before.

RIDE will not be hosting a budget webinar. We encourage you to carefully review the sample budgets and refer to the guidance documents. If a program is awarded there will be an opportunity to review and discuss the proposed budget.

20. What happens if a child enrolled moves out of town and a spot becomes available? Does the spot need to be offered to a state PreK child or a new child or a child within the program?

When a child from RI Pre-K moves, the Pre-K program works to connect the family to another RI Pre-K or Community Based Organization located in the new community. Depending on the Service Model implemented, the vacant RI Pre-K seat is then offered to the next eligible child on the RI Pre-K waitlist, or Head Start and CCAP enrollment lists.

- 21. Our preschool is a faith-based program, under the auspices of and located in our sponsoring church. Our curriculum follows the RIELDS, but we have an added domain for spiritual development. Would we be eligible to apply for this or future opportunities, all other stipulations being met?**

RI Pre-K classrooms must use a RIDE endorsed curriculum. As a free public program RI Pre-K programs must be non-denominational.

- 22. Do you have a plan for families who might want to register a 5-year-old who missed Pre-K this year into RI Pre-K next year?**

Children who are age eligible for Kindergarten will not be able to attend RI Pre-K. As Pre-K is not mandatory, and the RI Pre-K classrooms were open and available to families this year the 2021-2022 RI Pre-K will remain available only to children who turn 4 by September 1, 2021.

- 23. Is category # 5 only applicable to current 1/2-day programs, or can current full day programs also apply under this category?**

Yes, for Model 5, a full day program could apply to be transformed into a full day General Education RI Pre-K. The definition of a general education classroom is that no more than 10% of children require an IEP. While we realize that there are circumstances where this number rises throughout the school year the goal is to not have a classroom with a 51/49% split and, instead, reflects natural proportions.

- 24. On page 7 of the Grant Application and Policy Guidance, it states that the program will bill \$28,640 over 44 weeks for 9 CCAP funded children. Where did that number come from? And how does a program bill for that? That seems to be \$72/week and we do not see that as a CCAP rate?**

We apologize for the mathematical error. This should have read that the program will bill \$68,000 over the 44-week period.

- 25. In Model 4, why is the max award not to exceed \$143,000.00?**

All models are predicated on a per classroom cost of, roughly, \$198,000. In Model 4 it is assumed that the minimum cost to bill to DHS for CCAP funds is \$55,000. Therefore, \$143,000 would be the maximum billed to RI Pre-K.

- 26. How do I submit an application for a program that is applying for classrooms at multiple sites? Should these be completed and submitted separately?**

To complete a multi-site application, complete the Initial Application Page, the staffing chart and the budget forms for each individual site. We also suggest that you watch the webinar where the application pages are reviewed to ensure that this is done correctly.

27. What are the requirements for the submission of attachments by email?

Please submit attachments as listed within the application, identify appropriately and attach each separately within the email when submitting the application.

28. Do we reapply annually for the grant or is it carried over year-to-year?

RI Pre-K grants are awarded for a 3-year cycle, provided the program meets all annual requirements. Each year, programs will complete a renewal application for the following year, which is comprised of updated assurances, SOW, and budget requests.

29. Is there a cap on how many years you can receive this grant?

There is no term cap for RI Pre-K programs. As long as programs are in good standing with RIDE and the funding is available programs will continue.

30. Are districts expected to absorb funding after so many years?

Currently, districts are not expected to absorb the RI Pre-K funding. However, as RI Pre-K expands, and we aim to create sustainable changes within the state's early childhood system this may become a possibility. The potential for this to be a future strategy is one of the reasons that we developed the pilot service models. Leveraging funds to move half day integrated classrooms into full day general education classrooms is what is best for children, families and communities.

31. Does Model 1 require the opening of a new preschool classroom in a public school setting, or can an existing preschool classroom be converted to comply with RI Pre-K requirements?

Model 1, the traditional model, requires that a school have an unused classroom or a space that if converted into an RI Pre-K would not result in the displacement of any children. To use an existing preschool classroom with actively enrolled children the application would need to speak to how these children are not being displaced and the education program not disrupted.

32. Can the Education Coordinator be the school Principal or another designated staff person? What are the requirements of this Education Coordinator position?

Depending on the number of classrooms being supervised it is possible that the Principal could be the Education Coordinator. However, there are very specific and significant expectations and time commitments required for the Education Coordinator and we strongly recommend that LEA's hire or designate an Education Coordinator to support the RI Pre-K classrooms. Education Coordinators may not be the lead teacher in the RI Pre-K classroom.

The requirements for Education Coordinator can be found in the [CECE Regulations](#).

33. For Model 5, if the current preschool program is already an integrated preschool program, would they qualify to apply for the grant and extend the program?

Yes, a half day integrated program could apply for Model 5. This model assumes that the half day program will be extended to a full 6-hour day and be conducted as a general education classroom and not an integrated classroom. The grant funds would be used to support that transformation.

34. What happens if enrollment does not reach or dips below 18 students?

RI Pre-K programs receive a list of children selected in the lottery and a list of children who have been placed on a waitlist. If a seat becomes available, the program will use the waitlist to contact the next eligible child.

35. If an existing program does not meet the current RI PreK Hallmarks, are they ineligible to apply?

Programs will need to be able to implement most of the RI Pre-K hallmarks for the start of the school year. For example, a teacher with a relevant bachelor degree, a six-hour day, implementing an endorsed curriculum and using TSG, to name a few. Other hallmarks are achieved throughout the first year as a grantee.

36. Can we apply if the program does not currently have a BrightStars rating?

All Community Based and Head Start organizations must be actively working with BrightStars and have reached a minimum of 3 stars to be considered.

37. Can we apply if we currently do not use TSG for assessment? When does this particular training need to be completed by?

Yes, you may apply if you do not currently use TSG. The TSG training will be provided to programs prior to the start of school and throughout the year.

38. When applying for the grant, can we apply for more than 1 model and/or preschool program?

Yes, you may apply for more than model within the grant application. Answer the questions related to the specific service models for which you are applying and submit the appropriate proposed budgets.

39. If we do not qualify this year on the initial application then what options are available for next year?

A program that does not qualify this year should continue to work to improve quality and meet the minimum requirements working with DHS, the Center for Early Learning Professionals and LISC. If funds are available for expansion next year, a new application will need to be submitted. Applications for this year will not be held over to following years.

40. When submitting the application, is it acceptable to use an electronic version due to needing a signature and that it would also include the leading pages prior to the actual application?

The application must be submitted electronically. All the forms are fillable and should be included with the application. If you are unable to DocuSign, you can print the pages that need signatures and scan them in with your application. If using this method, please fill in the page electronically within the grant application and submit the duplicate signature pages as an attachment.

41. Can the Lead Teacher and the Education Coordinator be the same person?

The lead teacher and the Education Coordinator may not be the same person. The Scope of Work and time commitment for both the RI Pre-K Teacher and the Education Coordinator are significant. Additionally, the Ed Coordinator has an inherent leadership and supervision role which cannot be satisfied with one person in a dual role.

42. Can the State Pre-K classroom be located on the second floor?

Yes, the RI Pre-K classroom may be located on the second floor as long the classroom meets all health, safety, childcare and ADA regulations. RI Pre-K classrooms are available to all children so the physical building must be able to accommodate children regardless of needs.

43. Can an organization submit an application with the intent to operate the Pre-K classroom from a classroom in a new facility? This classroom would have a provisional Child Care license for half of the school year.

No, an organization may not submit an application for a new facility as they will not be part of the BrightStars program and have achieved a minimum 3 star rating within the new building.

44. If we can apply to operate a classroom out of a new building that is currently under construction, do we need to submit other documentation in lieu of photos?

No, an organization may not submit an application for a new facility as they will not be part of the BrightStars program and have achieved a minimum 3 star rating within the new building.

45. Do we need to submit transcripts for all identified teaching staff, including the Education Coordinators? Or could other supporting documentation be supplemented for transcripts?

Transcripts are needed for a teacher with a Bachelor Degree and not a teaching certificate and for the Education Coordinator to ensure the degree is in a related field and review the credit requirements. Please review the [CECE Regulations](#) for staffing.

46. For Models 2-4, are the fees set up as a fee-for-service arrangement? In other words, what is the fiscal risk, if any, if a child leaves the program and there is a delay (at no fault of the provider) in filling the empty seat?

No, the RI Pre-K funding model is designed as a reimbursement system and not a fee for service model. Programs will receive a waitlist, work with the RI Pre-K community within their city/town and RIDE to fill empty seat within the RI Pre-K. There is no monetary penalty for a Pre-K seat that remains vacant.

47. What are the guidelines for formatting, fonts, page length, etc. for the application narrative, if any?

Please keep in mind that this application is not designed in the same manner as the previous RFP. We are not asking for or expecting a narrative proposal. Fill out each section thoroughly addressing the question within the fillable space provided. Fonts should be size 12.

48. Is there any particular format required for photos?

Photos can be compiled into a zip drive or shared through another platform. They should be clearly labeled and attached to the email when submitting the application.

49. Is there any page limitations for the attachments?

There is no page limitation for attachments, however we ask that you adhere to the attachment guidance as the requested attachments are minimal.

50. Can schools apply for RI Pre-K if they are not current/active participants in BrightStars, even with the understanding and plan to apply as soon as possible?

As funding is limited, we are only accepting applications for programs with a minimum 3-star BrightStars rating.

51. How far back do we need to show for ECERS/CLASS reports?

An ECERS report should only be included if it is for the teacher proposed within the application and has a score of 5 or higher. We will accept an ECERS report that has been observed within the last 3 years.

A CLASS report should only be included if it is for the teacher proposed within the application and was conducted between 2019-2021.

52. Want to clarify - LEAs can reserve 5 seats for IEP students in conjunction with 2-3 seats for children already enrolled in the program.

No, LEAs can reserve 2-3 seats within a classroom as they are transforming half day programs into full day general education classrooms. We recognize that all children will need to have a seat and want to support LEAs as they transition to this model but as children are selected through the lottery, we also want to preserve natural proportions within each general education classroom.

53. Does the classroom need to be accessible? Would it suffice if we installed a ramp if the classroom was on the 2nd floor?

Yes, the RI Pre-K classroom may be located on the second floor as long the classroom meets all health, safety, childcare and ADA regulations. RI Pre-K classrooms are available to all children so the physical building must be able to accommodate children regardless of needs.

54. We currently have 2 preschool rooms and 1 Pre-K (not state). If we moved to having 1 preschool and 1 Pre-K/older preschool room, would we qualify for opening a full state Pre-K room? This would ensure no current students are displaced, as they will be moving rooms in September anyway, and will still ensure room for the toddlers that will age into preschool next year.

If you currently have an infant and toddler program this would still be considered displacing children as you currently offer, roughly, 54 seats and would only have 36 next year. However, this configuration would qualify under Model 4, Supplementing CCAP.

55. We currently have 2 stars from BrightStars but applied for 4, due to COVID we have not been able to get our ECERS screenings. How can we express this in our application so that we can still be considered?

We realize that COVID impacted many plans this year. If you submitted a BrightStars increase and were unable to have a visit due to COVID, you must obtain a letter from The Center for Early Learning Professionals in support of your application. The letter should include quality enhancements and work the program has achieved and be reflected in the application.

56. In the Budget forms, there's two sections labelled "Requested pre-k funds" and "Local Federal/State funds" - Can you clarify what "Local Federal/State funds you are referring to and are both columns combined supposed to equal 100%?"

Federal/State/Local funds are those funds that are offsetting your RI Pre-K costs in Model 2-5. For Head Start those funds would be the federal funds from your Head Start grant, for CCAP this would be funds from DHS through billable CCAP vouchers and for LEA's this would be funds you receive from the state in the funding formula. If you have any other income that can be used to offset the cost for RI Pre-K, for example city grants for early childhood education or a philanthropic contribution, you will list them there.

57. How many hours is the education coordinator required to work per week?

This number varies depending on the number of classrooms the education coordinator is overseeing. On average, each classroom will need 4-5 hours of the education coordinator's time each week, between observations of the classrooms, supportive supervision meetings, planning and assessment assistance and family engagement. The Education Coordinators must be available to the staff as needed, on a fairly regular basis, especially within the first few years of the grant. Education Coordinators must also be available to participate in Ed. Coordinator meetings, CoP's, PD/TA and other RIDE mandated activities.

58. Is there anyone we can reach out to for assistance in the budget detail sheet for this year's application?

Programs who would like assistance filling out the budget sheets may want to contact TA at the Center for Early Learning Professionals or reach out to a fellow RI Pre-K member who may be willing to offer some support.

59. Will the curriculum for UPK and the 3-year-old group be together or separate?

If this question is referring to a multi-age RI Pre-K classroom, then yes, we would anticipate that the classroom would utilize the same RIDE endorsed curriculum. If this question is referring to a program with a separate classroom for 3 year old children and RI Pre-K, then each classroom could conceivably use a separate curriculum, with the RI Pre-K using a RIDE endorsed curriculum. However, we strongly suggest that a program adopt one curriculum which will be supported through professional development, training and common planning time for staff.

60. Do we have to supply the teacher? We would need to hire one if that is the case. How much time would we have to hire someone?

Yes, the program is responsible for hiring all of the staff to work in, and support, the RI Pre-K classroom. Once awarded, funds are available on July 1, 2021. Programs who are in need of staff can begin the hiring process as soon as they are awarded a classroom and begin employment as soon as early as August 1, 2021 for training and orientation purposes.